

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 644

Introduced by Assembly Member Wieckowski

February 20, 2013

An act to submit an advisory question to the voters relating to campaign finance, calling an election, to take effect immediately.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 644, as introduced, Wieckowski. Campaign finance: advisory election.

The bill would call an election for the purpose of placing before the voters of the state an advisory question asking whether the members of the Congress of the United States representing California should propose and support, and the California Legislature should ratify, an amendment to the United States Constitution that reverses the Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission* and limits campaign contributions and spending, to ensure that all citizens, regardless of wealth, may express their views to one another and their government on a level playing field.

This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an act calling an election.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

1 (a) Large campaign contributions to political candidates create
2 the potential for corruption and the appearance of corruption.

3 (b) Large campaign contributions made to influence election
4 outcomes allow wealthy individuals, corporations, and special
5 interest groups to exercise a disproportionate level of influence
6 over the political process.

7 (c) The rising costs of campaigning for political office prevent
8 qualified citizens from running for political office.

9 (d) Because of early voting in California timely notice of
10 independent expenditures is essential for informing the electorate.

11 (e) In recent years the advent of significant spending on
12 electioneering communications has frustrated the purpose of
13 campaign finance requirements.

14 (f) Independent research has demonstrated that the vast majority
15 of televised electioneering communications go beyond issue
16 discussion to express electoral advocacy.

17 (g) Political contributions from corporate treasuries are not an
18 indication of popular support for the corporation’s political ideas
19 and can unfairly influence the outcome of California elections.

20 (h) The interests of the public are best served by limiting
21 campaign contributions, establishing campaign spending limits,
22 providing for full and timely disclosure of campaign contributions,
23 independent expenditures, and funding of electioneering
24 communications, and strong enforcement of campaign finance
25 requirements.

26 SEC. 2. (a) Notwithstanding Section 9040 of the Elections
27 Code, the following advisory question is placed before the voters
28 of this state at the November 4, 2014, statewide general election:
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30 “Shall the members of the Congress of the United States
31 representing California propose and support, and the California
32 Legislature ratify, an amendment to the United States Constitution
33 that reverses the Supreme Court’s ruling in Citizens United v.
34 Federal Elections Commission (2010) 558 U.S. 310, and limits
35 campaign contributions and spending, to ensure that all citizens,
36 regardless of wealth, may express their views to one another and
37 their government on a level playing field?”
38

1 (b) The provisions of the Elections Code that apply to the
2 preparation of ballot measures and ballot materials at a statewide
3 election apply to the measure submitted pursuant to this section.

4 SEC. 3. This act calls an election within the meaning of Article
5 IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect.

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